

Midwifery Students' Awareness and Development of Emotional Resilience through Reading Catharsis-Laden English Literary Texts

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Abstract— Midwifery students frequently encounter emotionally demanding clinical experiences that may lead to stress, fear, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. While various interventions have been used to promote emotional resilience, limited studies have explored the use of catharsis-laden English literary texts as a reflective educational tool. This study determined the effect of reading catharsis-laden English literary texts on the emotional awareness and emotional resilience of BSM 2 – St. Anne midwifery students. The study employed a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design involving thirty-nine (39) students from Fatima School of Science and Technology, Inc. A validated and pilot-tested researcher-made questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.9494 was utilized to assess emotional awareness and emotional resilience before and after the intervention. The intervention consisted of reading selected literary texts and completing reflective literary response activities. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired sample t-test, while qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis. Findings revealed a significant increase in empathic concern ($M = 4.18$ to 4.34 , $p = 0.01$) and emotional resilience ($M = 4.09$ to 4.26 , $p = 0.02$) following exposure to the literary texts. However, fear and anxiety showed no significant differences. Qualitative results indicated that literary engagement promoted emotional release, self-awareness, empathy, reflection, and adaptive coping among the participants. The study concludes that catharsis-laden English literary texts can serve as an effective reflective intervention for enhancing emotional resilience among midwifery students. The findings support the integration of literature-based reflective practices into healthcare and midwifery education as a cost-effective and innovative strategy for fostering emotional well-being and adaptive coping skills among future healthcare professionals.



Keywords— Catharsis-laden English literary texts, emotional awareness, emotional resilience, empathic concern, midwifery education, reflective learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has long been recognized not only as a medium for language learning but also as a powerful tool for emotional reflection, empathy development, and psychological insight. According to Rosenblatt (1978), literary meaning emerges through the transactional relationship between the reader and the text, enabling readers to connect literary experiences with their personal

emotions and realities. The concept of catharsis, rooted in Aristotle's *Poetics*, suggests that exposure to narratives characterized by pity, fear, and emotional conflict allows individuals to process complex emotions in a reflective and psychologically safe manner. Recent studies have further emphasized that emotionally charged literary texts promote emotional awareness, empathy, self-understanding, and reflective thinking among readers (Andrews, 2024; Palla, 2024; Pileggi, 2024). Likewise,

Charon (2021) emphasized the role of narrative medicine in developing empathy and emotional understanding among healthcare learners through literary engagement.

In healthcare education, emotional resilience has become increasingly important due to the emotional and psychological demands of clinical training. Midwifery students are often exposed to maternal complications, emergency deliveries, patient suffering, trauma, and fear of committing clinical errors. Studies have shown that healthcare students frequently experience stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and psychological pressure during clinical exposure (Labrague, 2022; Berdida & Grande, 2022; Santos et al., 2024). While interventions such as counseling, mindfulness training, reflective writing, and peer-support programs have been utilized to strengthen resilience, limited research has explored literary reading as a structured emotional coping mechanism, particularly among midwifery students in the Philippine context (Ramamurthy et al., 2024; Thompson & Li, 2024; Evans & Kallio, 2024).

The importance of promoting students' emotional well-being is further supported by Philippine policies. Republic Act No. 7722 (Higher Education Act of 1994) mandates higher education institutions to foster holistic student development, including affective and interpersonal growth. Similarly, Republic Act No. 11036 (Mental Health Act of 2018) advocates preventive mental health programs and the promotion of psychological well-being within educational institutions. Furthermore, the Department of Health (DOH, 2021) reported increasing mental health concerns among college students, particularly those enrolled in health-related programs.

In response to these concerns, this study investigates the effects of reading catharsis-laden English literary texts on the emotional awareness and emotional resilience of BSM 2 – St. Anne midwifery students of Fatima School of Science and Technology Inc. at Goa, Camarines Sur. Specifically, it examines changes in empathic concern, fear, anxiety, and emotional resilience following literary engagement. The study contributes to both English education and healthcare education by providing empirical evidence on the value of literature as a reflective and affective pedagogical tool. It also supports the development of evidence-based, literature-driven interventions that promote emotional resilience, well-being, and holistic professional development among future healthcare practitioners.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The international and Philippine bodies of literature converge to form a coherent, timely, and empirically grounded justification for the present study, Midwifery Students' Awareness and Development of Emotional Resilience through Reading Catharsis-Laden English Texts. Globally and locally, the reviewed literature shares a distinct similarity with the present study in its identification of the core problem space for healthcare learners face substantial, documented emotional burdens during their clinical training. This shared reality is anchored by international meta-analyses and empirical trials reporting that 42.1% of nursing trainees face moderate clinical stress, while up to 45% of medical learners exhibit severe clinical anxiety and depression during widespread healthcare crises (BMC Psychology, 2024; Silver et al., 2024). In the Philippine setting, this baseline problem is strongly mirrored by local data indicating that 38% to 55% of nursing and midwifery students experience moderate-to-high stress and patient care anxiety during hospital duties, aggravated by systemic mental health vulnerabilities across higher education institutions (Labrague, 2022). These statistical indicators demonstrate a clear, cross-cultural similarity for healthcare training across geographical boundaries is inherently emotionally taxing, creating an urgent, universal demand for structured psychological defenses.

In terms of interventions, the reviewed foreign and local works exhibit strong similarities in their reliance on reflective, narrative-based, and affective strategies to alleviate this distress. Internationally, structured narrative curricula, oral "story slams," and narrative bibliotherapy have generated stable, small-to-moderate effect sizes ranging from 0.30 to 0.50 in lowering burnout and enhancing tolerance for clinical uncertainty (Béres et al., 2024; Stringer et al., 2024). Similarly, local Philippine intervention trends involve mindfulness, clinical experience-sharing circles, and reflective journaling, which have yielded a 25% increase in empathy scores alongside a parallel 18% to 31% drop in academic and clinical strain (Austria, 2024; Bautista, 2023; Garcia & Kim, 2023).

Furthermore, the pedagogical and conceptual frameworks utilized across these global and local studies are highly compatible. Both the reviewed literature and the present study interlock along the same foundational conceptual framework, Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reading Theory explains how readers co-construct meaning and make personal-emotional connections with texts (Suarez & Diva, 2022); Bibliotherapy and Narrative Medicine justify why stories facilitate safe emotional

release and insight; Resilience Theory frames psychological adaptability as a teachable process; and the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping clarifies the cognitive appraisal mechanisms through which narrative reflection reframes personal distress into growth.

Despite these clear thematic and conceptual confluences, profound methodological and operational differences exist between previous literature and the present study, exposing the precise gap that this study fills. Methodologically, previous study in this domain depends heavily on active, expressive, and interactive modalities. Foreign studies by scholars like Conolly (2023) and Stringer et al. (2024) rely on expressive writing, spoken-word workshops, and group storytelling programs to achieve reductions in burnout. Local health interventions similarly utilize external frameworks such as mindfulness training, counseling circles, or peer-support systems (Garcia & Kim, 2023). The present study radically departs from these outward-facing methods by isolating silent, internal reading and individual textual transactions as the independent variable, establishing a private and deeply internalized coping mechanism that does not rely on group discussion or clinical simulations.

Operationally, the focus of literary engagement is completely restructured in this study. Existing Philippine research using Reader-Response frameworks typically treats literature as a linguistic tool within standard language classrooms, measuring its success by how well it improves reading comprehension or reduces English language-learning anxiety by 15% to 25% among learners (Suarez & Diva, 2022). This present study, however, pivots away from language acquisition and uses English literary texts directly as a psychological training ground to build clinical emotional resilience.

Furthermore, while traditional bibliotherapy programs often rely on broad, non-clinical cohorts reading arbitrary materials, this study introduces a highly controlled, text-based paradigm. It uses six specific, structurally intense literary works: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*, O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise*, D. H. Lawrence's *The Rocking-Horse Winner*, and Eudora Welty's *A Worn Path* which are curated strictly against six explicit literary-affective criteria: emotional conflict, emotional climax, reflective potential, human struggle, transformative insight, and reader engagement.

This study lies in the empirical design, scope, and target population of the present study. While past literature has broadly suggested that narrative exposure facilitates emotional processing, a major gap remains few

studies have quantitatively linked a student's precise awareness of literary emotional connections (pity, fear, anxiety) directly to resilience scores, and no research has explored this pathway within Philippine midwifery education.

The present study addresses this empirically important and practically urgent gap by transitioning from a purely descriptive or conceptual framework into a rigorous quasi-experimental design to quantitatively test this direct, causal pathway. Crucially, the study focuses on a highly specific and vulnerable respondent group of midwifery students. While foreign and local studies have heavily investigated generalized nursing respondents or medical residents, the unique psychological realities of midwifery trainees who navigate the intense, high-stakes emotional strain of maternal and neonatal care, birth trauma, infant mortality, and by now they become the front line of every emergency remain largely unexamined in study.

Based on the reviewed studies and literature, this study implemented a structured text-based intervention through reading and guided reflective literary response and utilized empirical measures to examine how BSM 2 – St. Anne midwifery students' awareness of emotional connections influences their resilience indicators. It moves past abstract recommendations to deliver a low-cost, curriculum-integrable, and culturally congruent strategy that transforms standard literary engagement into an evidence-based strategy for cultivating emotionally resilient, reflective, and compassionate midwives within the Philippine healthcare landscape.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design utilizing a one-group pretest–posttest approach to examine the effect of catharsis-laden English literary texts on the emotional awareness and emotional resilience of BSM 2 – St. Anne midwifery students. The design was deemed appropriate as participants were drawn from an intact class without random assignment. The study measured empathic concern (pity), fear, anxiety, and emotional resilience before and after exposure to the intervention. To enrich quantitative findings, qualitative data from reflective responses were also collected to provide deeper insight into students' emotional processing.

The respondents were thirty-nine (39) second-year Bachelor of Science in Midwifery students enrolled in Academic Year 2025–2026 at Fatima School of Science and Technology, Inc., Goa, Camarines Sur. Complete enumeration was employed, including all qualified students in the intact section. Inclusion criteria required

official enrollment, active clinical exposure, willingness to participate, and completion of both pretest and posttest procedures. Exclusion criteria included non-enrollment, absence during data collection phases, incomplete participation, or withdrawal of consent.

Data were gathered using a validated and pilot-tested researcher-made questionnaire consisting of four sections: demographic profile; emotional awareness (empathic concern, fear, anxiety) for pretest and posttest; emotional resilience for pretest and posttest; and perceived contribution of literary texts (posttest only). The instrument was validated by experts in education and language instruction and pilot tested to a similar group, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.9494, indicating excellent reliability.

The study was conducted in three phases: pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention. The pre-intervention phase involved securing permissions, obtaining informed consent, and administering the pretest. The intervention phase consisted of guided reading of selected catharsis-laden English literary texts (*The Yellow Wallpaper*, *The Story of an Hour*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *Still I Rise*, *The Rocking-Horse Winner*, and *A Worn Path*) accompanied by structured reflective literary response activities linking narratives to clinical experiences. The post-intervention phase involved administering the posttest and gathering reflective evaluations of the intervention.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (weighted mean) and inferential statistics (paired-samples t-test) to determine significant differences between pretest and posttest scores. Qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis to identify emotional patterns, coping strategies, and reflective insights. Findings from both datasets were integrated to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the intervention's impact.

Ethical protocols were strictly observed in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was ensured through coded identifiers. Data were stored securely and reported in aggregate form. Academic integrity was maintained through proper citation of all instruments and literary materials used.

Frequency and percentage were used to describe respondent profiles. Weighted mean was used to determine levels of emotional awareness and emotional resilience. Paired-samples t-test was employed to assess significant differences between pretest and posttest results.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Emotional Awareness before and after reading catharsis-laden English literary texts

The BSM 2 – St. Anne Midwifery students demonstrated an overall “Aware” level of emotional awareness prior to the intervention across the three indicators: empathic concern ($M = 4.20$), fear ($M = 4.06$), and anxiety ($M = 4.08$). This indicates that before exposure to catharsis-laden literary texts, the students already possessed a relatively high level of emotional sensitivity, particularly in terms of empathic responses toward clinical and human suffering.

Following the intervention, empathic concern increased notably from an “Aware” level ($M = 4.18$) to a “Very Aware” level ($M = 4.34$), suggesting that literary engagement strengthened compassion, emotional reflection, and patient-centered understanding. In contrast, fear ($M = 4.06$ to 4.09) and anxiety ($M = 4.08$ to 4.11) remained within the “Aware” range with only minimal increases. This implies that while catharsis-laden texts effectively enhanced positive emotional awareness, their influence on negative emotional states was limited.

These findings suggest that literary engagement is more effective in strengthening empathic and reflective emotional awareness than in altering fear and anxiety responses.

3.2 Level of Emotional Resilience before and after reading catharsis-laden English literary texts

The findings revealed that the students already exhibited a high level of emotional resilience prior to the intervention ($M = 4.08$), indicating their ability to manage stress and maintain emotional stability during clinical exposure.

After exposure to catharsis-laden literary texts, emotional resilience increased to a “Very High Resilience” level ($M = 4.23$). This improvement suggests that literary engagement contributed to enhanced emotional regulation, recovery from stress, and a more positive emotional outlook. The results indicate that structured literary reading supports resilience development by allowing students to process emotionally challenging experiences in a reflective and meaningful manner.

3.3 Significant difference in emotional awareness and emotional resilience before and after intervention

The paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference in empathic concern ($p = 0.01$) and emotional resilience ($p = 0.02$), indicating that the intervention effectively enhanced these dimensions. However, fear ($p = 0.38$) and anxiety ($p = 0.49$) showed no significant differences, suggesting that these emotional states were not substantially affected by the intervention.

These findings imply that catharsis-laden literary exposure is more effective in enhancing positive emotional constructs such as empathy and resilience than in reducing negative affective states. This aligns with catharsis theory, which emphasizes emotional release and reflection rather than elimination of stressors. Likewise, reader-response theory explains that students interpret texts through their lived clinical experiences, where deeply rooted fears and anxieties—especially those linked to real clinical responsibilities—may not be easily altered through reading alone.

3.4 Contribution of catharsis-laden English literary texts to emotional resilience development

The results show strong agreement ($M = 4.47$) that catharsis-laden English literary texts contributed to emotional resilience development among the participants. Students reported improved emotional understanding, stress processing, empathy development, and reflective thinking.

Qualitative findings further identified four key contributions: emotional release through catharsis, enhanced empathy, improved emotional regulation and meaning-making, and increased clinical preparedness. These suggest that literary texts function as reflective tools that enable students to safely express emotions, understand patient experiences, and develop adaptive coping mechanisms essential for clinical practice.

3.5 Output: Reading-based emotional resilience intervention

The study produced a reading-based emotional resilience framework anchored on catharsis-laden English literary texts for midwifery students. This intervention emphasizes reflective reading, guided interpretation, and emotional processing as structured pedagogical strategies to enhance empathy, emotional awareness, and resilience.

The findings support the integration of literature-based reflective interventions in midwifery education as a supplementary approach to strengthen emotional competence, promote patient-centered care, and assist students in managing emotionally demanding clinical experiences.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that BSM 2 – St. Anne midwifery students already possessed a relatively high level of emotional awareness prior to exposure to catharsis-laden English literary texts, particularly in empathic concern, fear, and anxiety. However, literary exposure further enhanced their empathic concern, elevating it from an “Aware” level to a

“Very Aware” level, indicating that literary engagement effectively strengthens compassion, emotional reflection, and sensitivity toward patient experiences. Despite this improvement, fear and anxiety remained relatively unchanged, suggesting that these emotional responses are more deeply rooted in direct clinical exposure than in literary intervention alone.

It is further concluded that the students demonstrated a high level of emotional resilience even before the intervention, which significantly increased to a “Very High Resilience” level after exposure to the literary texts. This finding confirms that catharsis-laden English literary reading contributes positively to emotional regulation, recovery, adaptability, and the maintenance of emotional stability in stressful clinical environments.

Moreover, there was a significant difference in both empathic concern and emotional resilience before and after the intervention, indicating the effectiveness of literary engagement in enhancing positive emotional dimensions. In contrast, fear and anxiety did not show significant changes, implying that while literary texts are effective in fostering emotional reflection and catharsis, they may not directly reduce clinically rooted stress responses.

The findings also suggest that catharsis-laden English literary texts significantly contribute to the emotional development of midwifery students by serving as instruments for emotional release, empathy formation, meaning-making, and adaptive coping. Through reflective engagement with literary narratives, students are able to process emotions in a safe and structured manner, thereby strengthening their preparedness for emotionally demanding clinical experiences.

To sum it up, reading-based emotional resilience interventions grounded in catharsis-laden English literary texts are effective as a supplementary pedagogical approach in midwifery education, enhancing emotional competence, empathy, reflective thinking, resilience, and patient-centered care.

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